



AETC Bases News Clips

Sheppard AFB, TX



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Sexual assault hot line set up at Sheppard

Air Force officials want to assess climate in base's training wing

By Lee B. Weaver
Times Record News
February 19, 2004

Hot line numbers for Sheppard Air Force Base: (940)676-0253 or DSN (940) 736-0253

Hot line for other personnel: 1-888-351-9477

A team of Air Force officials looking into allegations of widespread sexual assaults at Sheppard Air Force Base set up a hot line for base personnel.

The group of 22 investigators was commissioned by Air Education and Training Command commander Gen. Don Cook to look into the charges and to examine existing systems for reporting sexual assaults in the wake of a Denver Post story published last week.

"The team's goal is to assess the climate here, the atmosphere in the training wing," said David Smith, chief of media relations for the AETC at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio.

"The hot line is for Sheppard troops wishing to discuss sexual assault issues here at the base," he said. "The number will be staffed around the clock through Friday at 6 p.m."

The hot line number is (940) 676-0253 or DSN (940) 736-0253. Personnel assigned elsewhere can call 1-888-351-9477.

"The team members come from a broad cross-section of Air Force specialties," Smith said. "They're officers, enlisted personnel and civilians."

Eight members of the team are from Randolph and the rest are from Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, Vance Air Force Base in Enid, Okla., and Little Rock Air Force Base in Little Rock, Ark., Smith said. The team is lead by Col. K.C. McClain, AETC deputy director of operations at Randolph.

Investigators are interviewing a similarly diverse lineup of base personnel, he said.

"We're talking to commanders, first sergeants, training leaders, instructors and students," Smith said.

To maximize the team's contact with the 8,000-plus students on base, members are conducting group interviews as well.

"We randomly put students together in gender-specific groups of 10 to talk and to let them tell us what's happening," Smith said.

The team will also extend its review beyond Sheppard.

Times Record News
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"We will also send folks out to talk to the Wichita Falls Police Department and at First Step," Smith said.

First Step Women's Shelter and Sexual Assault Counseling, a crisis counseling center, was cited in the Post story as having seen two dozen Sheppard sexual assault victims from June 2002 to June 2003.

Officials with First Step hope to close the communication gap between victims and the base, said program director Xochitl Pruitt.

"What we would like to do is give them an insight into what our victims are feeling," Pruitt said.

As far as the team's access to victims, Pruitt said that decision is not First Step's to make.

"We have not told them not to talk, and we have not told them to talk," she said. "It's up to them."

Wichita Falls police had not met with the investigators yet but were ready to discuss the police department's methods of investigating sexual assaults involving base personnel, said Lt. Richard Garza of the Criminal Investigation Section.

The investigative team will be in Wichita Falls through Saturday. The team will report on its findings in the coming weeks, Smith said.

Staff writer Lee B. Weaver can be reached at (940) 763-7548 or with e-mail at [weaverl\(at\)TimesRecordNews.com](mailto:weaverl(at)TimesRecordNews.com).

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PAGE: Faxed
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AETC Bases News Clips

LUKE AFB, AZ



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Luke should alter jets' flight paths

To the editor:

My wife and I recently relocated from Kauai, Hawaii, to a new home in Estrella Mountain Ranch. When visiting the lot we selected with the sales person, two F-16's flew over and I asked if that was a normal occurrence and if we were in the Luke flight path. She responded with, "We get a few jets occasionally" but jet noise was not a problem here like it is in the Valley.

Well, when construction was complete and we moved in, we discovered that "a few jets occasionally" turned out to be three to five sorties of F-16s every day, and so low and noisy that we could not converse on the patio. I called Luke to complain about this problem, and the noise has decreased quite a bit lately; however, there are a few "hot shots" out there that insist on displaying his or her complete disregard and fly over like a speeding bullet, after burners blasting at an elevation of about 500 feet.

Ed Tilton has the right idea by putting cemeteries under the F-16 flight paths. We could call it "The dead zone".

My point is twofold: Sales persons should be more responsible when relating environmental impact issues such as jet noise, traffic noise and racetrack noise, and the commander of Luke Air Force Base should take the incentive to alter the flight paths so as not to fly over populated developments like the Estrella Mountain Ranch. There is plenty of land out there with nothing but cactus and sand. Try it, we'll like it.

Lew Shortridge
Goodyear

Money wasted to save Luke

To the editor:

What a flap over the misuse of racing jargon "street-legal." So be it, but it helps to bring the big picture into focus, which, along with the handwagon against the natural gas storage facility and push for cemeteries and golf courses, is that there is no compatible land use for the area around Luke AFB.

The results will be reduced property values for the surrounding landowners and increasing opportunities for developers to

buy land cheap. Add to this mix encroachment and the higher noise level of the next generation aircraft and what will you get, the demise of Luke AFB.

The politicians and boosters may be in denial, but the end is coming, so why not face reality and stop wasting our tax dollars on futile efforts to save the base.

Neil Peters
Arlington/Phoenix

West Valley View
PAGE: Internet
DATE: 19-Jan-04



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LUKE AFB, AZ



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State bills involve traffic, Luke AFB

By Jill R. Goodman
Independent Newspapers

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Two District 9 legislators spoke about transportation disagreements, how to preserve Luke Air Force Base and the Piestewa Peak controversy during the Feb. 13 forum of legislators George Davis created more than one decade ago.

"It started very small with one (legislative) district. It's grown to three," Mr. Davis said.

He invites all West Valley legislators to the monthly legislative breakfast at the Cracker Barrel, 16845 N. 84th Ave., Peoria.

The next breakfast is 7:30 a.m. March 12.

Speakers at the breakfast included District 9 Sen. Bob Burns (R-Peoria) and Dis-

trict 9 Rep. Phil Hanson (R-Peoria), who represent most Arrowhead Ranch residents west of 67th Avenue and south of Union Hills Drive.

Sen. Burns spoke about the "stand-off" by six senators to stall a bill to fund Valleywide transportation projects, including Loop 303.

Maricopa County voters will decide in November — instead of May when voter turnout is lower — whether to extend a half-cent sale tax to fund Valleywide transportation projects.

"We held out to give the people the right to vote,"

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Sen. Burns said.

The group of senators also argued for a bifurcated vote — a separate vote for light rail — which did not pass.

"The cost (of light rail) is not worth the benefit," Mr. Burns said.

Rep. Hanson said he opposed separate ballot issues since voters have shot down two past major transportation bills, including Prop. 400.

He said two different votes would confuse voters and cause many to vote no.

Rep. Hanson is also among several Valley leaders

working to protect Luke Air Force Base and surrounding auxiliary fields, as the federal government prepares to close 25 percent of U.S. bases.

He said the bill incorporates recommendations from the Governor's blue ribbon task force, which Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs said are "good, solid recommendations."

A Sun City resident asked about placing a "moratorium" on encroachment near the base.

It is not that simple, Rep. Hanson responded.

"We, morally and constitutionally, have the right to protect landowners," he said.

He said many of the farmers near the base were there

first.

"To them, that's their living and retirement," he added.

Rep. Hanson said he hopes the state find funds to buy the rights to all land surrounding the base.

In addition, El Paso Gas Co.'s efforts to locate a natural gas storage facility and pipeline near Luke AFB has been opposed by Maricopa County, Glendale and the state.

Rep. Hanson said House Bill 2134 would prevent this and should "sail through without opposition."

Rep. Hanson is also lobbying to transfer oversight of the State Board on Geographic and Historic Names from the Governor to legislators.

The board gained statewide attention after changing the name of Squaw Peak Mountain to Piestewa Peak — in honor of Lori Piestewa, a Native American soldier who died March 23, 2003 near Nasiriyah, Iraq.

"She's been called a hero. I have a different definition of hero," Rep. Hanson said.

He said the six state employees on the board voted to waive the 5-year waiting period for renaming, which is in place to eliminate "emotional" decision-making.

"I've said all along, I don't care what the damn peak is named. I just want integrity brought back to the process," he said.

Surprise Today

PAGE: Internet

DATE: 19-Feb-04



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LUKE AFB, AZ



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Early base closure lists bogus

People must act now in preserving Luke AFB

By **Charlene Patti Bisson**
Independent Newspapers

Citizens who think they have a secret inside scoop on the federal government's Base Realignment and Closure list might want to reconsider their findings.

According to military officials, a list will not be released until next year.

Retired Brigadier Gen. Thomas Browning said do not believe early-released lists.

"There has been a list that has been floating around the Internet for three or four months — that is totally

bogus," said Gen. Browning, who is a media spokesman on the BRAC process. "I don't know the original source. My best guess is it originated with some publication."

The fact is there is no authentic draft list or will there be until early next year. That is pure speculation on somebody's part."

Luke AFB did not make a list circulated on the Internet in Surprise and sent the Independent.

"The list is 100 percent not accurate," said Luke Air Force Base spokeswoman Captain Vanessa Hillman. "They (U.S.

Department of Defense) are still in the process of gathering data. Every single base across every service is being looked at."

Captain Hillman said a recommendation to the Secretary of Defense is not expected until May 2005.

Gen. Browning suspects more "bogus" lists will be released due to an increasingly high number of states and groups concerned about BRAC.

"You should not be encour-

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Base

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aged by bogus lists not having Luke on them," he said. "It is clearly threatened by home-builders enforcing the issue of encroaching the flight pattern."

West Valley Alliance member Bill Lipscomb said the group always monitors the Luke AFB encroachment situation. Mr. Lipscomb is a retired U.S. Air Force senior master sergeant.

"We (WVA) are trying to keep our fingers on the pulse of what is going on here," Mr. Lipscomb said. "It is interesting they (people) are already preparing these type of (BRAC) lists."

The BRAC process has begun and takes about 18 months, the general explained. The public input portion was completed and forwarded to the Department of Defense.

"The No. 1 decision point will be the value of that with the Department of Defense's mission," he explained. "The criteria will be published by the middle of this month."

As of press time, the criteria was not released.

Gen. Browning said the BRAC is in a comprehensive data collection process with a survey — fairly specific — and color-coded report card that is confidential with no opportunity for public input.

Because the data collection process is not over, Gen.

Browning said it is imperative for citizens to act now if they want to "save" Luke Air Force Base.

"If people want to fight the fight to preserve Luke AFB it is yesterday and today," he said. "Everyone is (scored) first and foremost on ability to focus on their long-term mission — as a state and community we need to pass a statute to reinforce Luke AFB."

Gen. Browning said there is legislation that will do this currently at the Legislature.

"If your readers are interested in protecting Luke, they need to pressure their Legislators to pass legislation this session," he said. "These statutes need to be on the books before the call is answered. Wait until next year

and it is too late."

Call (602) 926-3559 for the Arizona Senate and (602) 926-4221 for the Arizona House of Representatives. District 12 representatives include Bill Arnold and John Nelson while District 4 representatives include Tom Boone and Carole Hubbs.

In February or March of 2005, nine commissioners will be appointed and approved by the U.S. Senate.

"Once that is done, the Department of Defense will release the official draft list," Gen. Browning said. "The commission will say 'yes or no' and no base can be pulled from the list. The final vote is in May 2005."



Photo by Geno Lawrenzi/Independent Newspapers

West Valley resident **Floyd Brown**, is a founding member of the Luke West Valley Council. Mr. Brown speaks at community meetings encouraging citizens to contact their legislators to protect Luke Air Force Base's mission so it does not end up on the Base Realignment and Closure list.

Surprise Today
PAGE: Internet
DATE: 19-Feb-04